bilateral level and in multilateral fora, have been strengthened. Norway supports India's candidature for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. Indo-Norwegian economic cooperation has been established in the areas of hydro power, shipping, metallurgy, information technology, scientific research and management studies and space.

(d) and (e) During the visit of the Norwegian Prime Minister, the new areas identified for bilateral cooperation include environment, energy, metallurgy, marine and agricultural products, ports, space, information technology, biotechnology, health, oil and gas and desalination of water. An Indo-Norwegian Joint Commission at the ministerial level for trade, economic and scientific cooperation is also being established.

Indian Demand for Most Favoured Nation Status

529. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan's business community has endorsed India's demand for granting Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Pakistan's military regime has rejected the proposal;

(c) whether the issue was taken up by the Prime Minister with General Mushrraf during his recent visit to the country; and

(d) if so, what has been the outcome?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) Pakistan has not granted reciprocal MFN status to India. It allows only a limited number (600) items to be imported from India. During his Summit Meeting with the Pakistan President in Agra on 15.7.2001, Prime Minister proposed that a group of experts of both countries be constituted to recommend measures to increase bilateral trade, economic and technical interaction between the two countries.

Increasing number of foreign establishments

530. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minsiter of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foreign office establishments have grown enormously over the years;